

Agricultural.

Maple Sugar.

Veritable doubtless made more sugar last year in proportion to population, than any other State of the Union, Louisiana excepted. Our last crop was estimated at sixteen millions of pounds. Such favorable seasons for sugar making as that of 1857, do not occur every year—still with sufficient attention and skill, there is little room for doubt that not only can as much be produced in any fair season, but that the average quality can be so improved that the total cash value of the staple shall, in spite of the fall in the price of sugar, be fully maintained.

We compile the following valuable hints from several communications which we find in the *Agriculturist* for February, from farmers of much experience in sugar making, in several parts of New York State. And first concerning

TAPPING.—Our farmer uses in tapping, a 5-8 or 8-8 auger bit, making the hole 1 1/2 or 2 inches deep. The spout is made of hard wood, four or five inches long, a hole bored with a small bit through its length, and turned in a lathe, one end to fit the hole made by the bit in the tree, and the other with a head, over which the wire loop attached to one edge of the bucket, is slipped and held. The end of the spout is made quite tapering, so as to fill the hole perfectly tight at its entrance in the bark of the tree. This allows all the sap to pass through the spout, and prevents its escape otherwise. To "freshen" another hole is bored and another spout inserted near the first, so that the same bucket receives the sap from both.

Another uses spouts made of pine with a hole burned through, or sunniach with the pith removed, and properly tapered at one end to fit the hole.

The spouts need not be more than three inches long if the buckets are hung up, except in case of using one bucket for two or more spouts. This man says:

"In tapping I choose the North or West side of the tree, for this side will run when the South side will not, and will not cease running so soon in the season and will give more sap: of this latter I am confident. The tree should be tapped about four feet from the ground with a 1-4 to 3-4 inch bit, and two or three inches deep according to the size of the tree; for it is only the sap part of the wood that yields sap, and perforating the heart of the wood is very injurious to the tree, causing decay."

Both agree in *hanging* the buckets on the spouts, for if the buckets are set on the ground they catch many leaves blown by the wind, and the fact is abundantly proved that white sugar or syrup cannot be made from sap in which dead leaves have soaked—there is scarcely anything more deleterious.

Youth's Department.

The Two Cords of Wood.

Just at dusk, one November evening three children occupied the large kitchen connected with the establishment of farmer Grant. A bright wood fire blazed cheerfully in the wide chimney, while from the crane the suspending tea-kettle was announcing, as loudly as possible, that the hour for supper was approaching. By the bright, but fitful light, one young girl sat reading, another stood at the window watching the cows as they walked demurely from the yard to the stable, while a boy of eleven summers was seated on a cracker in front of the fire, gazing steadily at the flames as they shot upwards, but with an appearance of abstraction, indicating that his mind was elsewhere.

Softly Ellen advanced from the window, and touching her sister Ruth, to call her attention, whispered, "Just look at Thomas! He's in a brown study, as teacher said this afternoon. I do wonder what he is thinking of!"

"Ask him," responded Ruth glancing at her brother, and then glancing at her book again.

"Thomas," called Ellen, "what makes you look so-to-night? Did you miss at school to-day?"

The boy heaved a deep sigh, and then turned to his sister with smile, saying, "O Ellen, you can help me if you will; only you must first promise not to tell anyone."

Ellen promised, and Thomas let her to the farther corner of the room, as his mother had come in, he made known to her his plan.

"Last night," said he, "after you and Ruth had gone to bed, I made me feel so sad I could not go to sleep. She had been bringing in the clothes, and kept coughing as she always does when she works hard. Father told her that she must go to taking that doctor's stuff, that did her so much good last winter. At first she did not answer; but pretty soon I saw her put up her hand and brush away a tear. 'There are so many things to buy for the children, she said after a while, that I don't like to spend money for medicine. I don't often cough so much.'

"I know that, too," replied father, "but you must attend to your health. What should we all do without you?"

I sometimes think," said mother, "that my work is almost done, and if it is God's will to call me away he will provide for you and our dear children."

"I couldn't stay to hear any more, for I had to run into the entry to keep from sobbing aloud. O Ellen, what could we all do without mother?"

The young girl turned around, and gave her mother a piercing glance, as if to satisfy herself that her brother had cause for his solicitude, and then asked, "But what can you or both of us do to help her?"

I mean somehow to buy her a bottle of that medicine," exclaimed Thomas, impressively, "but how to do it is the question. Dr. Jones had a load of wood carted to-day, and he wants me to saw it. I would go to-morrow afternoon and ask him to give me the job, and the medicine to pay; only father wants his wood piled up to-morrow before the snow comes.

Ellen stood for one moment returning her brother's gaze, then said, eagerly,

"Ruth and I will pile it for you. We'll get up very early, and do our stint before breakfast, and then we shall have the whole afternoon."

Thomas joyfully accepted this offer, and readily obtained the job from the kind physician. Before night he had piled the two cords in the shed and sawed nearly a quarter of it.

"Well my little workman," said the doctor driving into the yard as Thomas was bringing up the saw preparatory to leaving. How much have you earned this afternoon?"

A bright thought flashed through the boy's mind, and in true Yankee style, he answered the question by asking, "Doctor, how much a bottle was the cough medicine you gave mother last winter?"

Half a dollar, I think. Is she sick again?"

The boy then communicated his wishes and with a flushed face inquired of the doctor if it would be willing to have one bottle to carry home with him.

The good man was evidently moved by this unexpected proposal. He made no reply except to invite the boy to his office. When there he talked more freely, and ended by giving him a small powder for his mother, with directions for taking it, in addition to the desired cough medicine, and promised to call him the next day.

An hour later Thomas sat with his sisters by the fire, and communicated to them the joyful results of his afternoon's labor. They then proposed to give the medicine to their mother, a token of affection from her children, "for," urged Thomas, "I could not have done it if you had not helped me!"

To say that Mrs. Grant was gratified would be but feebly expressing her emotion, when the love-token was placed in her hands.

With moistened eyes she gave each one a kiss, and then added in a subdued voice, "God will reward you, my dear ones. The blessing affixed to the Fifth Commandment will be yours, for you have indeed honored your mother."

God did bless them in rendering the medicine effectual in restoring the health of their mother, whose life he prolonged for many years. She saw her children growing up useful, happy, and respected by all who knew them.—*Youth's Companion.*

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The Dualists.

If the old aphorism—"there is no royal road to learning"—has ever been deemed applicable in a general way to other dualistic acquisitions, recent events are disproving its truth. Two Washington gentlemen met in a drug shop, got drunk together, got quarreling, insult one another, name their friends, make their arrangements, and then relying upon the interference of friends and the vigilance of the police, agree to shoot at one another in some unknown place, and at once secretly kept time. The affair leaked out, of course, as it was meant it should. Else how could the friends and the police have a chance to interfere and save bloodshed, or what is more likely, the cowardly hacking out of one party or the other? The telegraph immediately is burdened with the terrible tidings that two fools are about to shoot one another; that there is no chance for a reconciliation, that the police are on the scene, that the Hon. Mr. So-and-so and half a dozen other men as honorable as he, are straining every nerve to prevent the meeting. We are all astounded. We expect to hear of the bereavement of two women and two families of children. We seize with a mad interest upon the next dispatches. Alas! At the very last moment, the gentlemen make mutual apologies, shake hands, and the farce is over. The two knunks have made a reputation for bravery. Two Washington gentlemen in a drug shop get drunk together, get quarreling, insult one another, name their friends, make their arrangements, and then relying upon the interference of friends and the vigilance of the police, agree to shoot at one another in some unknown place, and at once secretly kept time. The affair leaked out, of course, as it was meant it should. Else how could the friends and the police have a chance to interfere and save bloodshed, or what is more likely, the cowardly hacking out of one party or the other?

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